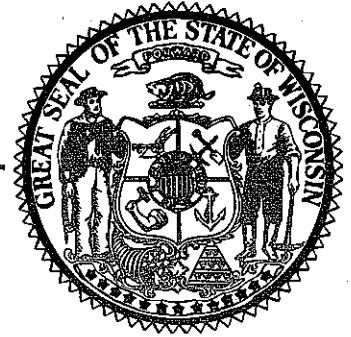


FRED A. RISSE
President
Wisconsin State Senate

December 5, 2007



Rep. J.A. Hines, Chair
Assembly Committee on Public Health
10 West, State Capitol
HAND DELIVERED

Dear Rep. Hines,

Thank you for scheduling a public hearing on Assembly Bill 539, which will allow 16 year old residents of Wisconsin the opportunity to voluntarily donate blood. I apologize that I am unable to attend the hearing in person.

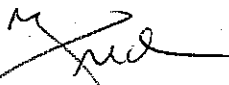
Under current law, any person who is 17 years of age or older may donate blood on a voluntary basis.

Assembly Bill 539 will expand current law to allow 16 year olds to voluntarily donate blood, with parental consent. At this time, 17 states allow this practice.

According to the American Red Cross, every three seconds in America someone is in need of blood. Additionally, approximately 60% of the population is eligible to donate blood and only 5% actually do. By expanding the pool of eligible blood donors, we are not only assisting in filling a void, but giving teens the opportunity to make a difference.

Thank you again for your consideration of Assembly Bill 539. If you should have any questions about this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Most sincerely,


FRED A. RISSE
President
Wisconsin State Senate

FAR:skb
CC: Members of the Assembly Committee on Public Health



**American
Red Cross**

Blood Services

Mid-America Division,
Badger-Hawkeye Region
4860 Sheboygan Avenue
Madison, WI 53705
608.233.9300
givebloodgivelife.org

December 5, 2007

Dear Wisconsin Legislature:

The American Red Cross strongly supports the ability of 16 year olds to donate blood with parental consent. We support enactment of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 539 because it will increase the number of eligible donors and enhance our ability to meet the current demand for life saving blood and blood products.

Several states, including California, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Washington and Puerto Rico allow 16 year olds to donate blood and the American Red Cross's experience with these young adults has been very positive. We have found that 16 year olds are enthusiastic donors who often recruit their parents as donors as well.

Every two seconds in America, someone needs blood – for emergencies, disease treatment, transplants or surgery. As the need for blood increases, so does the need for more blood donors. Allowing 16 year olds to participate in our life-saving mission will increase the success of our high school blood drives and will have a significant impact on the blood supply.

This year more than 1 million people gave blood for the first time, and many will go on to become lifelong blood donors. The Red Cross believes that 16 year olds who have parental consent should have the chance to make their first donation and to learn about the benefits of their generous gift and their opportunity to participate in life saving service for their community.

Assembly Bill 539 will have a positive affect on blood for the residents of the state of Wisconsin who may one day need a lifesaving blood transfusion.

Sincerely,

Tony Procaccio, CEO
American Red Cross Blood Services
Badger-Hawkeye Region
4860 Sheboygan Ave
Madison, WI 53705